



# News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Interior Department issues Record of Decision for Alpine Satellites Development Plan**

Today, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Rebecca Watson signed the *Alpine Satellites Development Plan* Record of Decision authorizing the first commercial oil development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The development on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is part of ConocoPhillips Alaska's proposed expansion of its existing Alpine oil field just to the east of the petroleum reserve. In addition to the two production pads authorized today, the expansion will include three pads outside of BLM jurisdiction. ConocoPhillips is seeking authorization from other federal, state and local agencies for these pads to be located on state and private lands.

"This plan is a model environmental approach for the Arctic region. It allows for the energy development our country needs, while protecting the land, water and wildlife. It will show that this, and future Arctic development, can and will be done in an environmentally sensitive way," Watson said in announcing the decision.

The Record of Decision modifies the company's original proposal in order to offer even greater protection to wildlife and sensitive habitats. Some of the major changes include relocating portions of proposed gravel access roads and pipelines outside a 3-mile setback for Fish Creek, raising pipelines an additional 2 feet (to 7-feet high) to assist migrating caribou, and moving power lines from separate poles to cable trays mounted on the pipeline supports. In addition, the Record of Decision requires monitoring and other mitigation to reduce environmental impacts.

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“We made a number of positive adjustments to reflect considerations raised by the public and agencies,” said BLM’s Alaska State Director Henri Bisson. “Several key changes responded specifically to concerns about subsistence issues raised by residents of Nuiqsut,” he said, adding “It is also important to note that what we are authorizing is consistent with our 1998 leasing plan for this area.”

Bisson also noted that keeping the entire access route outside the Fish Creek setback would have resulted in greater impact to wetlands and waterfowl habitat than keeping a portion of the access within the setback. “This is why we make exceptions – we look at site-specific data and take the best approach.”

The two pads and associated roads and pipelines approved by Watson will be the first commercial oil development in the petroleum reserve, which was established by the federal government more than 80 years ago for its oil potential. Oil from the petroleum reserve is currently planned to enter the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in the summer of 2008.

The five-pad satellite expansion project represents an important addition to the production of the estimated 429 million-barrel Alpine field, one of the largest discoveries in the U.S. in decades. By 2006, production from the first of the five pads will begin tapping more than 330 million barrels of additional oil. This amount of oil will produce 6.5 billion gallons of gasoline and 3.1 billion gallons of diesel or heating fuel. This equates to at least a year’s supply of gasoline for 15 million private vehicles and heating fuel for more than half the homes in the Northeastern United States.

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